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Independent Study of Problems of Intelligence ManagementStatement of the Problem:

I have seen a number of innovative approaches to management problems founder because, in my opinion, they were prematurely launched. Often, under different circumstances, months and years later, they have been adopted subsequently. Some, not yet adopted, may be worthwhile. Can we stimulate such innovative thinking and increase the likelihood that meritorious proposals will be adopted?

A proposal:

One proposal, which deals only with aspect of the problem-- that of improving the initial formulation of an innovative approach, is to merge the concepts of sabbatical leave and an Intelligence Institute. A qualified intelligence officer who has gained experience and wishes to explore some aspect of intelligence management or practice can request time to research the issue. His application would be screened by the Institute, which would recommend granting or disapproving the leave on the merits of the proposal and the qualifications of the officer. If approved, the officer would establish a program of action which would consider the data requirements and access, possible training requirements, access to specialists where required, and the time phasing of the program. This would be done with the participation of the Institute which would assist in providing resources and access where required. The Institute would probably require a schedule of status reports, a means for termination should the study end in a blind alley, and a vehicle for publishing any results of consequence. In some cases, the Institute might wish to recommend that additional study be continued by the officer, a contracting organization, or a component of the Agency.

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Such an approach would be more productive if broad-based, assuming a Community-aspect where appropriate, and permitting a mixture of outside study and internal research where appropriate. This would depend largely on the ability of the Institute to open academic and governmental doors.

This proposal is a supplement to, but not a substitute for, a program of external training. The Agency continually needs to upgrade its skills. But there are also many areas where an experienced officer, looking at a problem with his own insights in a situation free of immediate office pressures, may come up with a valuable solution or a contribution toward a solution. The opportunity to take such a look at a problem may be valuable both to the Agency and to the individual officer. Consider, for example, the officer who is in a dead-end job, but has an innovative view on some other aspects of Agency operations. Consider the officer who is rising fast but would like more time to come to grips with a significant Agency problem.

With only brief thought, many potential topics come to mind:

Modelling the Agency in the perspective of the most recent advances in information theory--how would this change our view of production, collection, and processing?

Evaluating personal performance;

Evaluating the performance of particular activities;

Establishing a feedback mechanism so that we may better support high level customers;

What measures can be taken to improve public access to unclassified aspects of Agency production?

These are only samples. Of course, they are also topics of concern to Agency management and presumably would be studied by the appropriate line and staff officers. Even so, it is unlikely that we have yet found the final answers.

A note about the Institute:

The Institute, which could be staffed and administered by OTR, should probably be placed under the O/DCI so that it could play its Community role and resolve the problems of access that might be encountered by the officer pursuing independent study within classified activities.

Though I have dwelt only with one aspect of its activities, it could probably assume a variety of roles. For example, it might administer the Senior Seminar on a Community basis. It might also arrange mixed programs of academic study and independent study. It also could assume some role in R&D with respect to management practices and intelligence processes. For example, it might contract for studies of the interrelationship between decision-making, uncertainty, and the role of intelligence. It could also publish a revamped Studies in Intelligence.

Notes on administration:

Officers pursuing independent study should be funded centrally, through the Institute. The amount of such study would then be controlled by the total budget available. Parent organizations should be permitted to express their views on applications for such study by their own officers, but their views should not necessarily assume a veto power. In many cases, the undertaking of a program of independent study may be the assumption of a calculated risk that the officer will not return to his parent organization, a risk both on the part of the officer and of the office. The total program of independent study need not assume any large cost; I expect that its benefits--tangible and intangible--may be significant.

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WEC

/F WE ASSUME THE MAG PROPOSAL ATTRACTIVE TO WEC, WE SHOULD SUPPORT HUGH IN HIS MORE TEMPERATE APPROACH. IT PROBABLY IS TIME FOR SOMETHING OF THIS NATURE BUT A MODEST BEGINNING - A TESTING OF THE WATER - IS DESIRABLE.

/F WEC SHOULD SEIZE THE WHOLE BIT AS PROPOSED BY MAG IT COULD DEVOUR A PILE OF ASSETS. CONSEQUENTLY, THOUGH I AGREE THAT OTR SHOULD NOT TAKE ON MORE UNTIL IT HAS BETTER ORGANIZED ITS CURRENT ACTIVITIES, THE LESSER EVIL IS TO GO WITH HUGH IF WEC ACCEPTS/ENDORSES HIS MODIFICATION. WE SHOULD MONITOR SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.

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